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*A Manual on
Sketching From Life*

This book teaches the reader clearly and concisely how to become an efficient figure artist. It analyses the details of the subject and puts forward a programme of study whereby speedy success may be assured.

A MANUAL ON SKETCHING FROM LIFE '

By

L. A. DOUST

AUTHOR OF

"A Manual on Caricature and Cartoon Drawing"

"A Manual on Figure Drawing and Fashion Designing," Etc

With Twenty-six Illustrations by the Author



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Introduction

"There you have touched the life of our design."

SHAKESPEARE: *Troilus and Cressida*, ii, 2.

No matter how rough a sketch, how poor its technique, or how weak its composition, if it is not alive, it is a failure. In drawing there is design, technique, and life, and the greatest of these is life.

Your aim must be to make a drawing life-like. This does not necessitate a lot of finicky detail; in fact, the most life-like drawings are the simplest and least finished.

It is the artist who can draw vitality who commands the highest price for his work, and how is this quality of life to be attained? By going direct to life, that is to say, making your sketches from the living personalities around you.

Do not let your desire to render a pretty drawing swamp the importance of retaining the essential life and character of your subject.

A Manual on Sketching from Life

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY AND GENERAL REMARKS

THIS book is not a guide for aspiring Royal Academicians, or to any of the more complicated technical methods of graphic art, such as oil painting, water colouring, etching, or wash illustration. It consists of a few practical hints and rules for sketching your fellow-men, arranged and selected especially for those who are able to devote only their spare time to this profitable and enjoyable hobby. It is compiled by one who was just as limited and hampered; and who, by dint of patience and perseverance, has been able to make this fascinating work his profession.

I definitely assert that a living may be made, in this sphere, by anyone with sufficient energy, apart from any great natural ability.

Drawing is the oldest form of language and is man's most natural method of expressing his impressions of his surroundings and neighbours.

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

It is easier to obtain efficiency in drawing than in writing or in the spoken word. A few right lines on a piece of paper are much more vivid than the most elaborate description. This is the reason for illustrated advertisements and literature. Moreover, as progress is made, one's observation is developed, and you will discover subtleties of beauty, interest, and humour to which the many are blind. Again, one's appreciation of the abilities of great artists is more keen and conscious.

I have tried to keep in mind the limitations and scope of this book, and thereby to condense my remarks even to a degree of abruptness and to have no unnecessary filling or "gags." Consequently, I strongly advise a slow and careful reading, and that you should keep this book continually at hand.

There are the results of many years of experience between these covers, and every word will have to be tested practically by you. Learning is not experience, but is a good guide to it.

MATERIALS

It is usual in a book of this kind to devote an entire chapter to advice on material. Here, again,

MATERIALS

I wish to respect your intelligence and the limitations of this book by only noting my own past difficulties and experiments. Concerning paper for pencil sketching—not too smooth and not too rough. A pad of cartridge paper is very suitable. Pencils—B, good make.

For pen or brush work a smoother surface paper of good quality. For quick strong work in ink, a No. 1 or No. 2 sable water-colour brush is effective, when used with skill and precision. Many of the sketches in this book are so drawn with the brush.

For strong work, say, of heads, hands, or feet, drawn three inches big (an excellent practice), a slightly rougher surfaced paper and a softer pencil or a Conté crayon or carbon pencil; the last two give a rich black line and tone.

Charcoal is very good for large studies on cartridge paper, particularly for those who are inclined to be cramped in style. There are two varieties of charcoal, Russian and Vine; the latter is the more popular. Use a duster when rubbing out (or a piece of putty rubber). To prevent such drawings smudging it is necessary to use a fixative and sprayer.

All the above materials can be obtained from practically any art dealer or stationer.

Of course the above are only suggestions for

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

your experiment. You will eventually find the material most pleasing to yourself.

Scribbling pads can easily be obtained for a few coppers, and to most minds this gives a healthy recklessness concerning spoilt paper which is necessary for continual effort. Plain writing pads (no lines) have quite an effective face for quick ink sketching.

ON MAKING A PRACTICAL START

Continued practice is everything. May I repeat this? Continued practice is everything in learning to sketch. Be careful always to carry with you some paper or a small pad and a pencil. At a station, in a queue, in the park, everywhere there are opportunities for a lightning impression. A ten minutes' wait should be a full page in your sketch book. Do not hesitate until you can find a comfortable seat or an isolated position. I have filled many pages on a crowded race-course while it was pelting with rain; I have snapped overhead views of people from the top of a bus. One soon becomes used to such minor discomforts, and it is surprising how vividly alive are the jagged lines of an impression made in an awkward moment. Sub-consciously the fact of participating in the same surroundings and atmosphere of the subject



A



B

PLATE 2. PORTRAIT SKETCHES IN WASH

(p. 79)

(Reduced from 12 in. 6 in.)

ON MAKING A PRACTICAL START

which you are sketching has its effect on your work. You will notice this when you refer to such rough notes some months later.

It is very important to preserve the life and atmosphere of these hasty efforts. Better not touch them at all than, by adding to them, to destroy this vital impression which is their value. If you wish to make a finished drawing from them—*e.g.*, in ink—work on another piece of paper, try to recall the incident, and put down as near as possible the same lines; then work on this duplicate.

I mentioned a moment ago that one could not always be isolated when sketching out of doors. Nervousness is a natural hindrance, but remember that, having thoroughly read this book, you are that much in advance of any criticism from those who have not had this information.

It is surprising what little curiosity you will excite, and there is every possibility of being mistaken for a well-known artist, for all great "life" artists practise this type of study. You, who are interested in sketching, have seen artists at work in public, but, I may safely say, have taken every precaution not to embarrass them. The quick sketcher is much less open to public criticism than the painter with all his paraphernalia of stool, paint box, board, and easel. Personally, I have

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

never been disturbed when using my pad and pencil, and when painting have had many charming encounters. Children, of course, must be treated kindly but firmly, and if disregarded will soon fade away.

An old artist friend of mine, while travelling on a steamer, wished to make notes of the rapidly changing colours of the sky. He whipped out his sketching block, brushes, and paint box. "Hold this, please," he said to the person next him, handing the water pot. He worked rapidly for twenty minutes. Then, turning to thank his willing assistant, he discovered her to be a charming young lady who had thoroughly enjoyed her small service. The point is that the artist did not care who watched, so long as he got his sketch. Artistic success depends upon forgetting your audience in the importance of your subject.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

The following are a few general hints on drawing. Do not worry about wasting paper. Go boldly at your subject, even if you tear it up afterwards. The quantity of paper used must not enter your head. A reckless use of material is essential. Your care and thought must be entirely for your work, not for the paper or pencil.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Don't draw a line carelessly ; make up your mind as clearly as you can what you want to do, and do it as quickly and ably as possible. Think before you work. Look at the figure or object to be drawn five times as long as you take to draw it.

Do not be hesitant or uncertain in your line.

Do not draw too heavily at first.

Decide, say, upon the slope and angle of a shoulder ; look quickly and keenly, comparing it with any other lines in close approximation to it, such as the top of a chair. The last point is illustrated at the top of Plate 3.

Do not worry about accuracy in drawing so much as cleanness of line. It is common practice to advocate preliminary exercises, such as those on Plate 3, from simple shapes, such as the sphere, cube, etc. This is sound, but I suggest that you practise for a clean steady line direct from the figure ; for one thing you will find this more interesting.

Get into the habit of looking at your subject with half-closed eyes. This will eliminate all unnecessary detail, and will make folds, shapes, and edges of shadows stand out clearly. You will see lines where before there was a blur ; and, most important of all, the lines you do see will be those upon which the pose of the figure depends.

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

Don't be upset if, in these preliminary exercises, your drawing is rather hopeless. Keep spoiling paper with good lines.

The examples on Plate 3 may be effectively copied. Now, I want to persuade you to copy this plate, also Plate 7, at once. Time yourself. In a fortnight do this again, and you will be surprised at your increased speed and accuracy—that is, if you have worked steadily at your sketching from life and objects during that fortnight. It would benefit you to copy these or other plates at regular intervals. Remember, that what most matters is not the drawing but the “quality” of line and speed, so do not forget to make a record of time spent. For instance, a fairly efficient student should be able to make a good copy of Plate 3 in a minute and a half; twice the size (as the original) should take two minutes. You will find a pencil most suitable for these speed exercises. The illustrations in this book are done in ink for clearness.

ARTISTS TO STUDY

While on the subject of copying it may be necessary to mention a few suitable masters of penwork from which you may choose to study technique. When I say technique I mean the variable types of

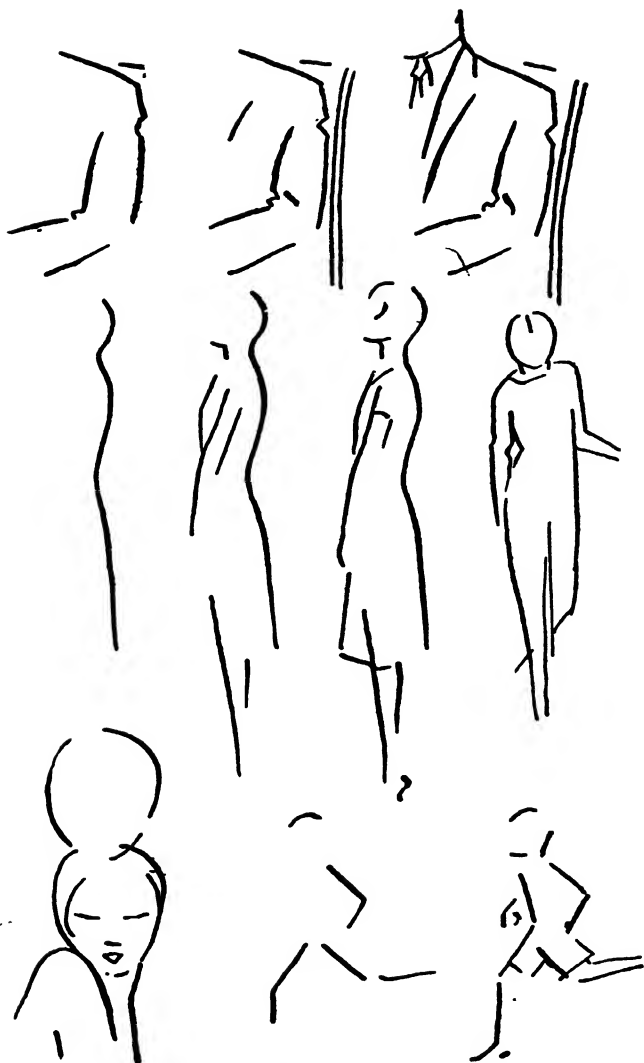


PLATE 3.—PRELIMINARY LINE EXERCISES

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

lines which they use to give the impression they seek. Notice the importance of every line ; its thickness, boldness, delicacy, and certainty. Notice the variety of line and where it is broken. See Figs. A₁ and B₁, Plate 14, and notes. Do please study the works of the following artists, but first read this book :—

Chas. Keene (early copies of *Punch*).

Phil May (*Punch*, about 1900).

Of these two it may be said that any of their works is well worth copying.

The following artists have worked for the best of the humorous papers and for various advertisers :—

Bernard Partridge.

Frank Reynolds.

Fougasse.

Arthur Watts.

E. H. Sheppard.

Leo Cheney.

The following précis of the foregoing chapter must be at the back of your mind :—

Work as often as you can. Work wherever you are.

Don't look for a subject, take the nearest.

ARTISTS TO STUDY

Don't mind wasting paper. You won't be wasting time.

Be certain of your line before you put it down.

A good line is better than a pretty drawing.

Get the habit of half-closed eyes.

Above all, you must get speed.

CHAPTER II

PERSPECTIVE

As the hints in this book are solely concerned with figure drawing, no attempt will be made to tackle the problem of landscape and building perspective. I propose to deal with these important subjects in further books of this series.

As we all know, figures appear to get smaller as they get further away. The primary rule which governs this illusion must be mastered.

The simplest illustration of perspective is a railway track or a long tunnel. Parallel lines, which go away from you, always appear to meet. This is an invariable rule, and is the basis of all perspective. On Plate 4 I have indicated these imaginary converging parallel lines in connection with figure drawing. Notice that there is one horizontal line in each sketch. This is the level of the artist's eye, and to this all other lines converge. It is called the horizon. This will be quite clear to you if you carefully study Plate 4. Once again may I emphasize that the key to the problem is that horizontal line, called the eye-level or horizon?

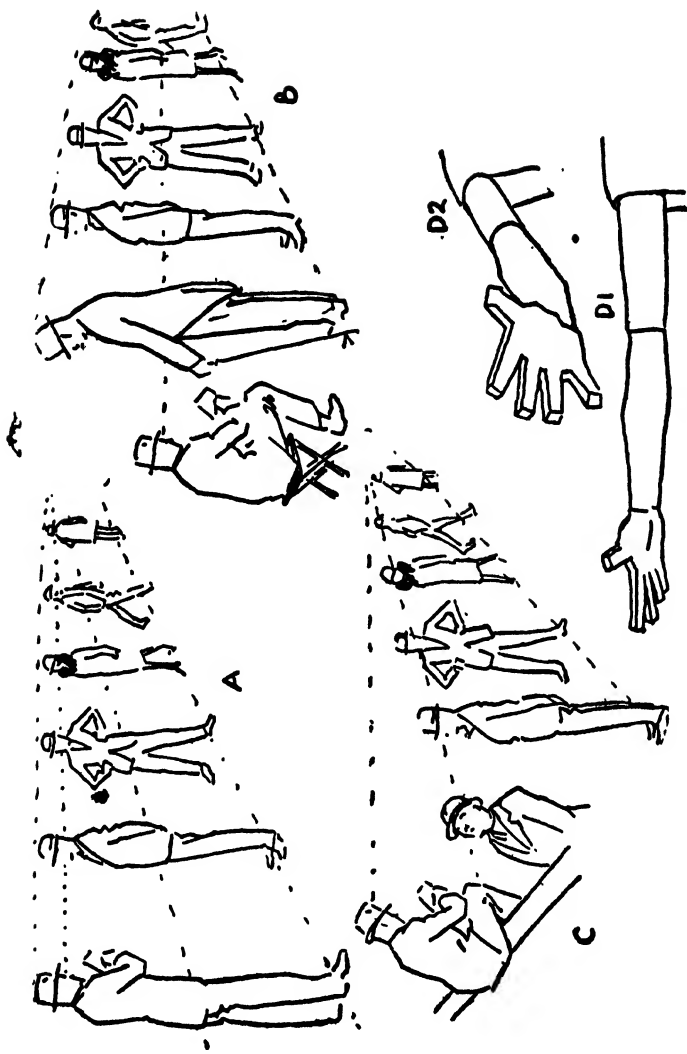


PLATE 4.—PERSPECTIVE

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

In drawing fore-shortened limbs—that is to say, limbs in perspective—it is sufficient to remember the primary fact that the end of the limb farthest from you appears to be considerably smaller in proportion. This is illustrated in the diagram D on Plate 4. Notice how much larger the hand appears when extended towards you than when it is on a level with the shoulder. A great aid to seeing perspective is to stand back from the centre of a window and compare the angle of any lines in the objects outside with the frame of the window. Imagine this frame to be the outline of your drawing paper.

FORM

The next essential fact always to have at the back of your mind is “form,” or the fact that the figure which you are drawing has thickness as well as outline.

If you study closely the great masters of figure drawing in outline, you will be amazed to discover that they manage to indicate the “form” of a body without the use of shading. How is this done? The secret of these clever drawings is often in certain lines on the figure or head and not actually on the outline—a fold, a collar, a cuff, a crease. Look at these lines carefully, and you will observe

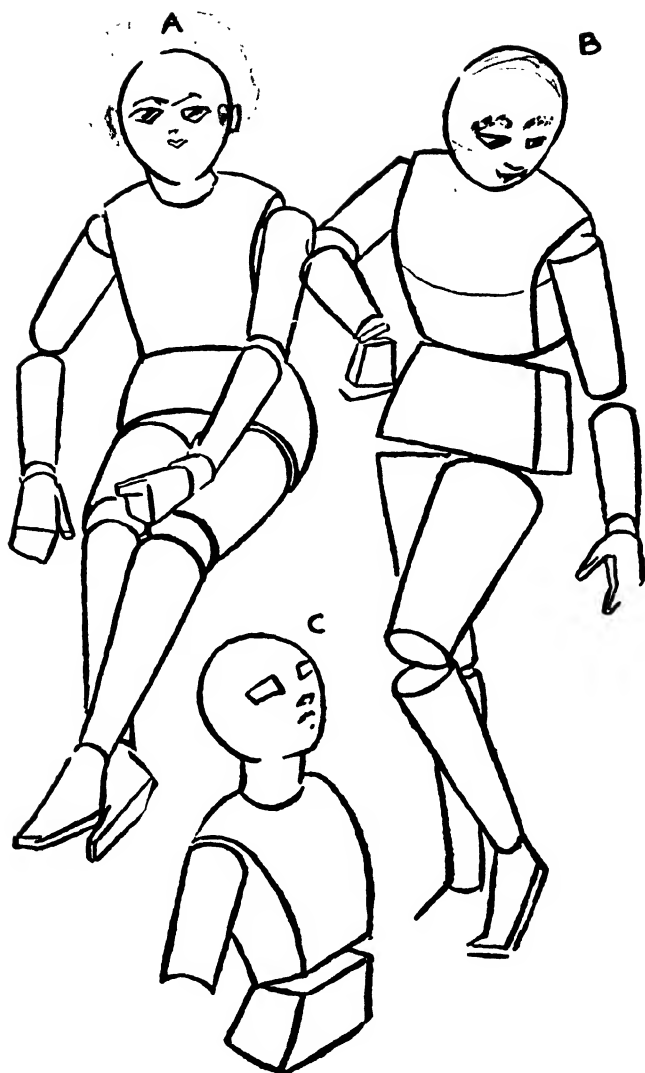


PLATE 5.—BLOCK FIGURE (FEMALE) TO SHOW FORM

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

that they are very correctly drawn, sometimes even more so than the actual outline. A simple illustration of this point is in Fig. E, Plate 12. The kind, thickness, and shape of the hat are all expressed by the few lines in the front of the crown. If you will copy this drawing, omitting these lines, you will find this point clearly illustrated. Also notice how the careful placing of the features in Fig. B, Plate 9, gives a rounded form to the head.

It is most important, and particularly so for those of you who may never have the opportunity to perfect your figure drawing and knowledge of the effect of certain movements upon certain bones and muscles, to get firmly set at the back of your mind the truth that you are drawing a rounded form.

Plates 5 and 6 contain representations of figures in various positions with this idea of thickness foremost. I am not going to lay down any rules for this method of drawing, but suggest that, after having carefully studied these plates, you take some of your own quick sketches and reproduce them on this method. Think of your figure as a simply-carved wooden doll with elastic joints. It would be a splendid idea to trace off one or two of these figures, and attempt to work up such tracings into a more life-like drawing. The setting of the head upon the neck and the

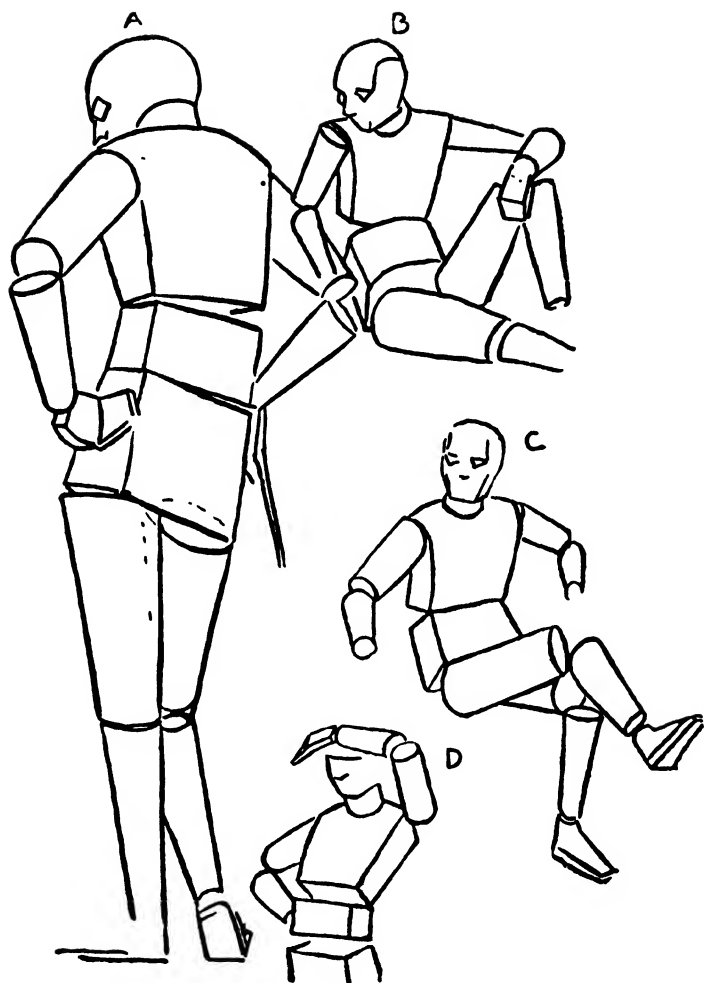


PLATE 6.—BLOCK FIGURE (MALE)

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

neck upon the shoulders is most important. Observe especially Fig. C, Plate 5, and Figs. A and C, Plate 6. The rounded neck seems to stick out of the top of the chest. Compare Figs. A of each plate. Also should be noticed the breaks in the trunk due to bending.

AVERAGE PROPORTIONS

On Plate 7 you will see side views of the male and female figures. The lesson to be learnt from this plate is simple, but cannot be over-emphasized. The comparative proportion of these two figures must be always borne in mind. In each case the trunk of the figure is between lines A and C. You will note that in the female figure the trunk is, if anything, longer, although the whole figure is shorter than in the male; consequently, the legs of the latter are longer. Now observe the waist lines on both figures, and their relative position to one another, and also to lines A and C. The distance A to C is about the same in both figures, but the measurement from waist to shoulder is considerably shorter in the female figure, making the distance B to C much shorter in the male.

These proportions are to be taken only as a general rule. Do not rigidly adhere to them at

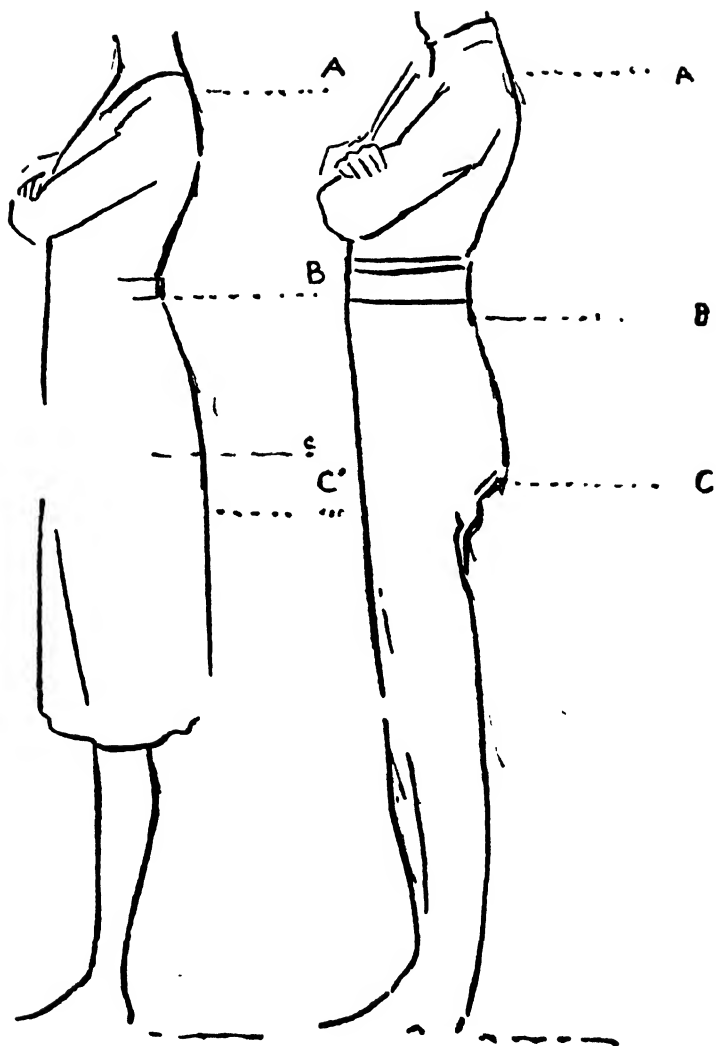


PLATE 7.—PROPORTIONS: SIDE VIEW

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

the expense of the individuality of the subject drawn.

Please turn back to our doll-like drawings on Plates 5 and 6, compare these with Plate 7, and say which plate is of the male and which is of the female figure. You will at once see that Plate 6 represents the male, and Plate 5 the female. This difference of build, as expressed in Plate 7, is much more necessary than superficial differences such as beard, long hair, thin ankles, full breasts. Especially is this so in quick sketching. In Plate 8 you will observe the same proportionate construction from full front view of figures. Generally, it may be said that a man has broader shoulders and narrower hips than a woman.

On Plate 9 we come to a more detailed examination of "form" in the head. Figures A and B need hardly any explanation, but a description may make them more impressive. The general form of a head is egg shape or ovate, with the pointed end at the chin. For instance, we have to draw a head tilted upwards and sideways. The outline of Fig. A is an egg shape drawn at the correct angle. Now we draw curved lines to express the curve and tilt of the features; if the head was quite straight these lines would also be quite straight—see small sketch at the side. Now we put the features on these lines as in Fig. B. You

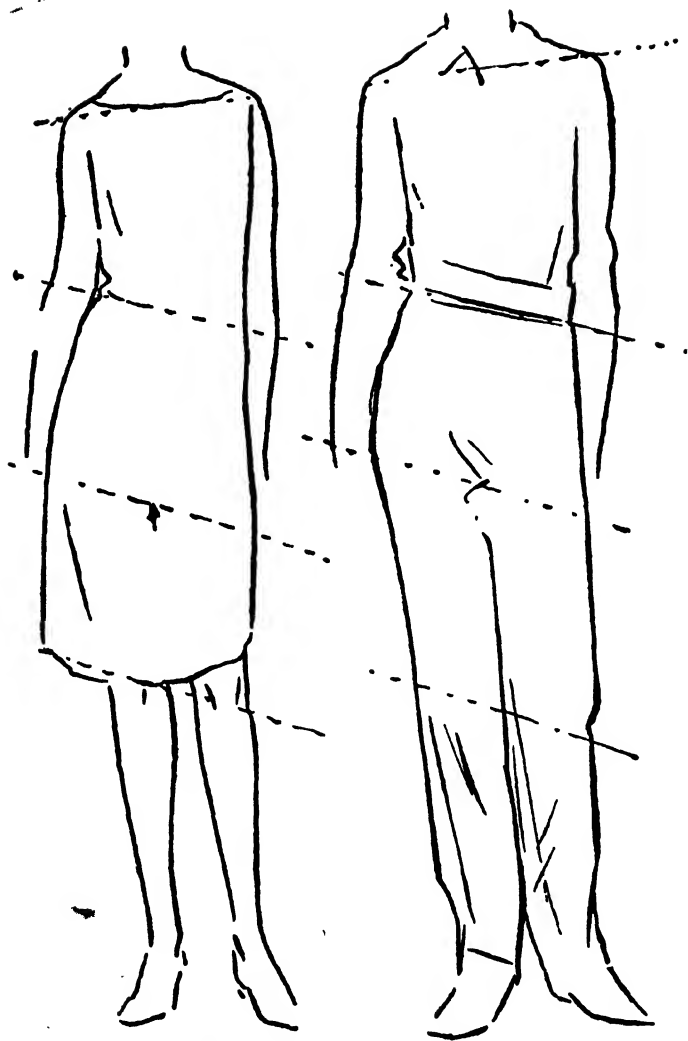


PLATE 8.—PROPORTIONS · FRONT FULL VIEW

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

will observe that the result gives a roundness and form to the face, although no shading has been used.

Figs. C and D express the influence of the skull upon the drawing of the head and face. Notice the eyes set in a hollow. This is seen much more clearly when the light is well above the head. Notice also the forehead, the cheeks, and the jaw ; in all thin faces and most male faces each of these is very obviously bony ; you will see the great value of this fact in character studies, such as those on Plate 20, Figs. A and D.

A partial side view is shown in Figs. E and F. In Figs. G and H you have a similar method of construction to that of Figs. A and B. Fig. J is a side view of Fig. H. The bony structure is not so clearly seen in the head of a young woman as in that of a young man.

The head of a child is peculiar for its bulging forehead, short nose, and very full cheeks and lips. Here the bones are entirely hidden except in the forehead. Fig. L shows the prominent bulge of a child's forehead and cheeks when tilted forward. Notice the position of the ears in relation to the eyes in all instances.

It will be found very beneficial to memorize the following précis of this chapter :—

, All perspective is based upon an imaginary line horizontal and level with your eyes.

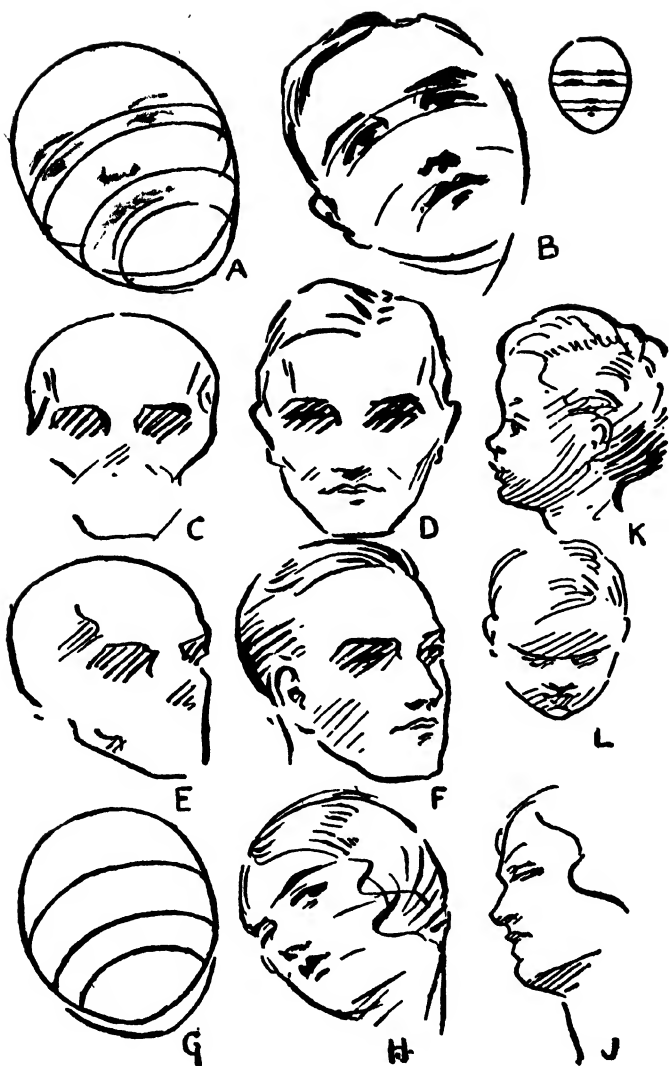


PLATE 9.—CONSTRUCTION OF HEADS

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

A form has thickness as well as width and length. Try to make a figure look solid. Shading is not essential.

The great difference between the male and female figures is "proportion," not features.

The head is egg-shaped, and the skull dominates the variations of this shape.

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Chapter III
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CHAPTER III

DETAILS OF FEATURES

As has been noted in the previous chapter, the careful and accurate drawing and position of features are very essential in order to obtain a life-like effect.

Many people can get a likeness to a face, but they often feel that there is a heap of difference between their drawings and those of professional artists. Very often this is entirely due to a poor knowledge of the construction of the details of a face.

The Eye.—Let us give attention to the eye. It is a round ball set in a socket, and over it the lids slide. Plate 10, Fig. A, shows the shape and hollow of this eye socket in a skull. In Fig. B you will observe that the shape of this socket is retained, and from it the round ball of the eye protrudes, leaving a hollow near the nose. The bulge of flesh over the outside corner of the eye is important. See Figs. B, C and E, Plate 10.

In all these remarks you will find it helpful, as you read, to study each point in a mirror.

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

The lids of the eye are fairly thick ; the upper lid and its lashes cast a very definite shadow on the eye ball, and the lower lid usually makes a slight crease under the eye.

The Nose.—Every nose varies and tremendously, and it is only by careful study and copying of noses from life that you will get to know the general rules upon which the nose is built. The main thing is to draw the nose to stick out and not to look flat. Notice Fig. H, which shows the simple form. The slight bump in the centre of the ridge of the nose is caused by the bone—this you can easily feel. The end of the nose is soft, but, sometimes, very sharply defined. Do not neglect the very definite dip in the top of the nose ridge beneath the brow. A well-drawn nose is the most effective indication of any tilt in the head. For example, see Plate 16.

The Mouth.—Mouths do not vary so much in shape as noses, but are very mobile. This great variation of movement presents continual difficulties. The drawings on Plate 10 are a basis from which you may learn to draw the mouth in any position. In repose the top lip is bow-shaped, and the bottom lip fits into it closely ; the bottom lip is sometimes thicker and shorter. See Figs. L and K. From a side view the upper lip nearly always overhangs the lower. See Figs.

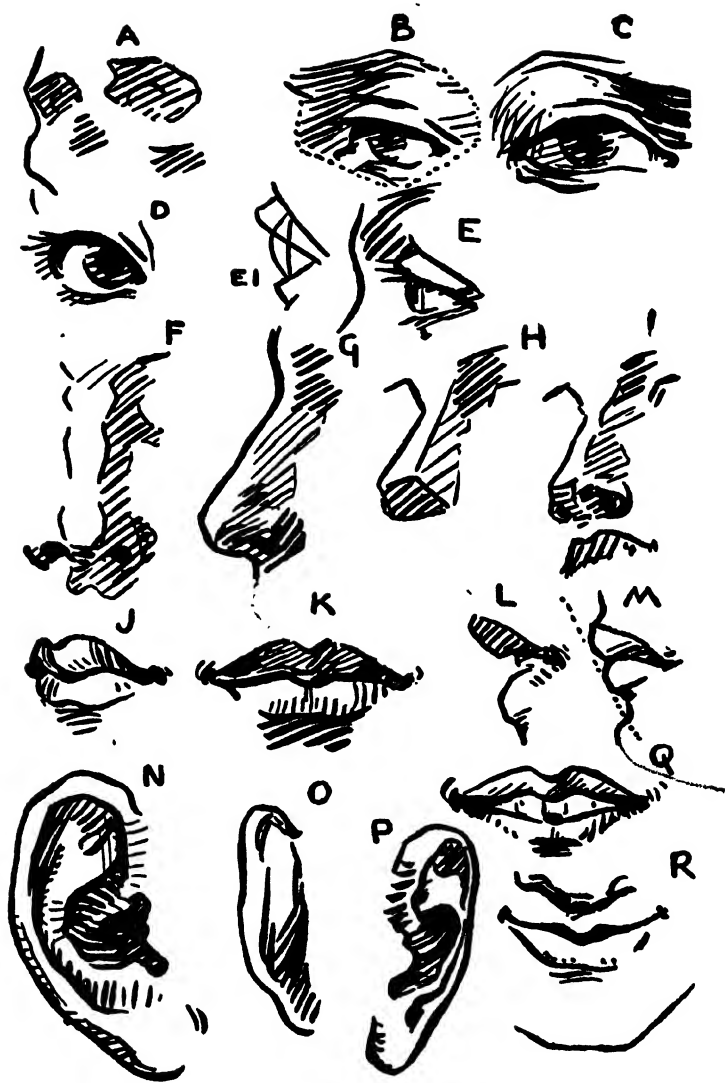


PLATE 10.—FEATURES

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

L and M. This is particularly so in children. See Plate 9, Fig. K. There is a sharp dip immediately under the lower lip. The deepest shadow is in the corners of the mouth. Please notice Fig. R, Plate 10, with its thin upper lip, due to the downward tilt of the head, and full lower lip; also the raised ends of the mouth. This position is reversed in an upward tilt to the head. See Plate 9, Fig. B.

Ears.—Ears present interests peculiarly their own. They do not move; they have no bony structure; their shape is complicated. No other feature or limb shows more variation of form than does the ear. I have attempted to draw on Plate 10 three simple studies of an orthodox ear, but you will only appreciate the limits of the many variations by continual drawing of ears from life, and close comparison with Figs. N, O and P. Ears, although the least important of the features, are not easy to draw. They are the only ones of which we have a back view. See Fig. O.

On this plate you have a very few of the many positions of the four features, consequently I can only advise you to study continually, to make careful drawings of your own features from a mirror, and, when in street, bus, or building, to use your eyes constantly in comparison and

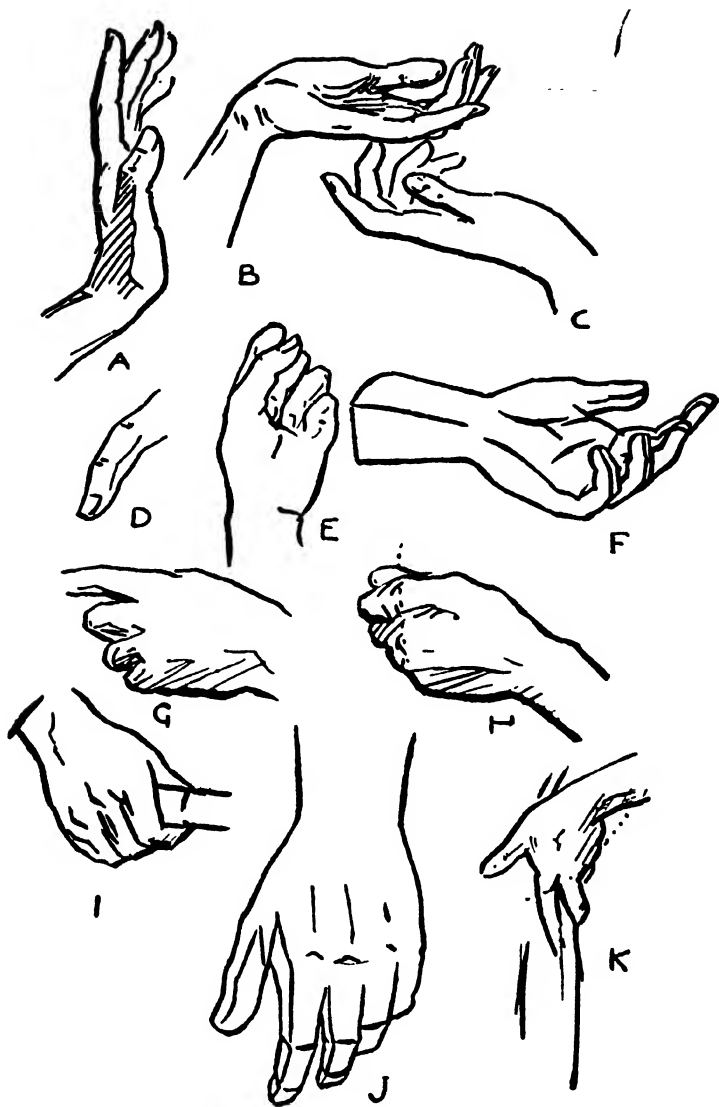


PLATE II.—HANDS

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

observation of the eyes, noses, mouths, and ears around you.

Hands.—It has been said that, if one can draw a hand, one can draw anything ; and it is certainly true that more artists fail in the drawing of hands than in anything else.

No other part of the human frame has such a variety of movement as the hand. The back of the hand can flatten or curve. The thumb has a rotary movement entirely different from the fingers ; and the whole is on a flexible joint, the wrist, which has all the qualities of a ball and socket.

There are several general rules about the shape of the hand, when performing certain duties, which will be helpful to you. On Plate 11, Fig. A, you will observe a hand upraised. Notice how each finger bends a little more than the one in front. In Figs. F and J the same thing occurs. This is the natural position of a relaxed hand. One might say that in Fig. A or F the little finger has started to close up, and, in the clenched hand, shuts on towards the centre of the palm, the other fingers fitting in on a slope. This is caused partly by the large muscle at the joint of the thumb. See Figs. E and H. You will notice that invariably the hand, whether clenched or open, tapers to the forefinger. In Fig. B the little finger is straighter

HATS

than the others; this is a common affectation, especially when holding a cup of tea. Also should be noticed the dotted lines in Figs. H and K, which illustrate the curve of the knuckles. The knuckles always stick out when the hand is clenched or holding. Even in the simplest of drawings this must be suggested. See Fig. I. Remember that fingers taper except in age or ill-health, and they are as fleshy as the ear and as bony as the nose, the fleshy part being on the inside. The line on Fig. D serves the dual purpose of showing this fleshy pad and the solidity of the finger. This principle of a pad upon a bony structure is one which governs the whole hand, and must be borne in mind always. The sideward motion of the hand is much more limited than the forward or backward movement. Compare Fig. H with Figs. B and C. The block-like diagrams of Figs. F and J are merely to indicate the proportional thickness.

Although you may copy these sketches, it would be better if you made very careful studies, and kept them for reference to finish up your quick life work.

HATS

Plate 12 shows a few very simplified drawings of hats and shoes. At first sight a hat looks a

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

very simple object to draw. This is not so, especially when worn.

First and foremost, a hat must fit on to a head, or rather a head must fit into a hat. It must look hollow, and, when worn, must look as if it enclosed a rounded object, the head. If this impression is not obtained, not only have you failed to draw the hat, but you have destroyed the "form" of the head. A hat well drawn will be very helpful in giving a roundness to the head; for example, the line of the hat brim around the forehead in Fig. B. I have previously mentioned the shade lines on the crown of the hat in Fig. E, which give form and shape. In one instance, Fig. C, the outline of the head is indicated by a dotted line. It would be a good idea for you to sketch in lightly the outline of the head in all these examples.

In your early work you will probably not find it easy to draw a bowler hat distinguishable from a soft or felt hat. In Figs. A and C you have these two hats. Please notice the trifling but important differences which go to make each hat one of its type—the slightly broken overlapping line in the top of felt crown, Fig. A, the thin hard brim of the bowler, and its flatter top and more rounded curve, Figs. B and C. There is a flatness in the front of the brim of all hard hats. See Figs. B, C, and F. In Fig. A the waviness of the



PLATE 12.—HATS AND SHOES

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

line of the hat band indicates the slightly tapering side of the felt hat (see Fig. A₁) as compared with the parallel sides of the bowler, shown in Fig. C₁, and expressed in Fig. C by the regular curve of the hat band.

Do not overdo the dip in the crown of a soft hat.

A cap is a simple proposition, because it is not so definite in shape. The points to remember are—the depth of the peak; the fact that the cap overlies most of the peak; and that the cap goes down well over the head.

It would be an excellent exercise if you study each hat closely, and, shutting the book, draw them from memory.

FOOTWEAR

It is much more difficult to draw a shoe round a foot than to draw a hat over a head. Remember that a new shoe is less like a foot than an old one. It is seldom that one gets an exact side view of a shoe (see Fig. L), but it is essential to memorize such a view, as the slope of the instep, the bend-up of the toe, and the set of the heel affect every position. In a high-heeled shoe the toe does not bend up, owing to the weight being thrown on the fore part of the foot.

FOLDS AND CREASES IN CLOTHES

The particular points to notice are:—

Shoes are practically always seen from above.

A line drawn through the centre of the sole will, if continued, go through the centre of the heel—see dotted lines, Figs. G and H.

The heel and sole of the foot are nearly always in the same plane when the foot is still.

If you can draw a shoe in repose you will find it very easy to draw the bend of it when walking, etc.

The toe caps and the part covering instep never crease.

The slope of the instep must always be indicated whatever the position of the shoe. For example (Fig. I), the horizontal lines of the creases near the toe cap emphasize this important slope.

Study these drawings and find the above rules which govern the general direction, slope, and curve of a shoe.

Do not copy these, as was advised with hats, but make careful shaded studies of actual shoes and boots, both old and new.

FOLDS AND CREASES IN CLOTHES

Apart from the actual figure this is the most important study for successful life sketching.

On Plate 13 you will notice that nearly all the illustrations are of men's clothes. It may be

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

safely said that if you can manage to master the folds and creases in men's modern clothes you have mastered the chief difficulties of drapery drawing.

Some of you may recall the wonderful drawings of drapery by the old masters, such as Botticelli ; fold over fold, crease within crease, all so accurately drawn that the form of the figure beneath and its pose are intensified by the very drapery which covers it. Cast your eye upon Fig. D, Plate 13. Alas, not an old master nor a new one, but just a quick sketch of folds! Even in this you will see how the folds give the form and pose of the figure ; such is the great purpose of folds in a drawing.

There is not space in this book to tackle the subject of different materials and their variety of crease, but the following tips are easily overlooked.

The folds of silk are sharp and jagged when compared with those of velvet or similar soft material.

The thicker the cloth the larger and bolder the creases.

A thin material unless very hard cannot stand up in big folds, but breaks into many little ones.

It is good practice to make studies from different materials dropped carelessly over the arm of a chair.

FOLDS AND CREASES IN CLOTHES

are very clear, and the boniness of the actual knee should be suggested by a sharpness of line.

A tautness or pull on the cloth is very well expressed in the coat of Fig. D, and the inside of the thigh at the right leg in Fig. G. All such folds radiate from the pulling part which in Fig. D is the left shoulder. Most interesting is the effect of this pull across the shoulders. This figure is a particularly fine example of the three types of creases :

Crumpling creases—the top half of the sleeve.

Hanging creases—in both legs of the trousers.

Taut creases—across the back.

The slight crumpling due to the lift of the coat by the right arm is nearly swamped by the strong pull from the left shoulder.

Make a special note of the sharp crease at the bottom of the trousers leg in Fig. F caused by it resting in front upon the instep, and hanging straight from the calf at the back. The straightness of the front view of the back leg in the two walking positions, Figs. H. and G, should be memorized. Notice the outward swing of the front trousers leg in both these figures, making a floppiness on the one side and a simple outline of the leg on the other side.

Where the outline of the figure is clearly seen

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

and there are no creases, very correct and clean drawing is essential.

Observe how the clean sweeping lines in all these drawings emphasize the use and meaning of the creases, and *vice versa*.

I have had to describe the problem of folds and creases rather laboriously, but you will, by persevering in your studies, find it one of the most fascinating features of life drawing. Nothing tells a man's character and nature more clearly, to the careful observer, than his clothes. How is it you recognise your friends or relatives when they are standing some distance from you and with their backs to you? It is, to a great extent, by the hang of their clothes.

Folds give "form" (Fig. D) and movement (Figs. G and H). Notice how the legs (Figs. G and H) appear to be walking by themselves.

Never draw a crease unless you have decided what type it is, whether crumpled, hanging, or taut; what is its length, breadth, and direction. A badly drawn crease destroys the very action and form which it should emphasize. Notice how the whole strength of the pose in Fig. B, Plate 16, depends on the quickly and accurately drawn creases.

It is splendid practice to make quick studies, such as those on Plate 13, from good photographs

POINTS TO REMEMBER

in periodicals, taking care to find out the reason for every crease and to draw the most important ones first.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Points to memorize from this chapter :—

The Eye is a ball in a hollow. Memorize sectional drawing E1, Plate 10.

The Nose must stick out ; the bridge bone must look part of the skull. Every nose is very individual.

The Mouth is nearly always bow-shaped. Remember the slope of dotted line, Plate 10, Fig. M. In quick sketching merely draw the top lip and the hollow under the lower lip.

The Ear is shell formed. The top is approximately level with the eyebrow, and the general slope is towards the chin.

The Hand.—The top is bony ; the inside soft and padded. Nearly always the first finger is the straightest or least closed.

Hats.—Make them look as if they fit a round head. Take special care with the brim.

Shoes.—The heel and sole of the foot are nearly always in the same plane when foot is still. Whatever the position, remember the slope of the instep.

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

Folds and Creases.—Three types—crumpled, hanging, taut; they are most important factors in everyday life sketching, and express form and movement much more than shading or shadows; they are worthy of the closest study.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR SKETCHING FROM LIFE

HAVING placed before you a few of the necessary axioms and fundamental principles for sketching the human figure in ordinary everyday life, I wish, in this chapter, to take you out on an imaginary sketching jaunt and to analyse briefly the aims to seek, the difficulties to dodge, and the method to use when out with your sketch book.

No attempt has been made in this book to tackle the inexhaustible subject of figure drawing with its many branches of study of the antique, of anatomy, and of representation of flesh, bone, and muscle in the many mediums at the artist's disposal. Nevertheless, you, with your direct sketches from daily life, will achieve something which many an artist fails to get in a whole lifetime of art studio education.

When you have thoroughly examined and retained the fundamental principles in the previous chapters of this book, you will be well equipped with sufficient technique to start straight away drawing sketches of your fellows.

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

Before discussing the examples of life work in Plates 15, 16, 18 and 20 it is absolutely necessary that you get the following universal rules firmly set in your mind.

First.—Don't try, in a quick sketch, to draw the figure—draw the pose. That is to say, train your mind to seize quickly upon the lines which go to express the action of the figure, and put them down at once, no matter how crude and whether they look like a human being or not; then, according to time and convenience, you may add to them. See Plate 3 and Figs. A, B and C, Plate 18. Remember that all drawing is a problem of memory, for you cannot look at the subject and your drawing at the same time. On this method you do six minutes' actual drawing in half an hour, but you will find that the result will be cleaner, more accurate, and more workmanlike in appearance than if you had fallen into the common error of spending more time on the drawing than in the study of the subject. You will find that every line you put down has a meaning and is not useless. I heard it said of a man once that he was a great talker. The question was at once asked, "Yes, but does he talk sense?" This applies to your drawing. Be sure that every line makes sense, *i.e.*, is necessary and serves its purpose.

Secondly.—Don't be frightened of drawing a

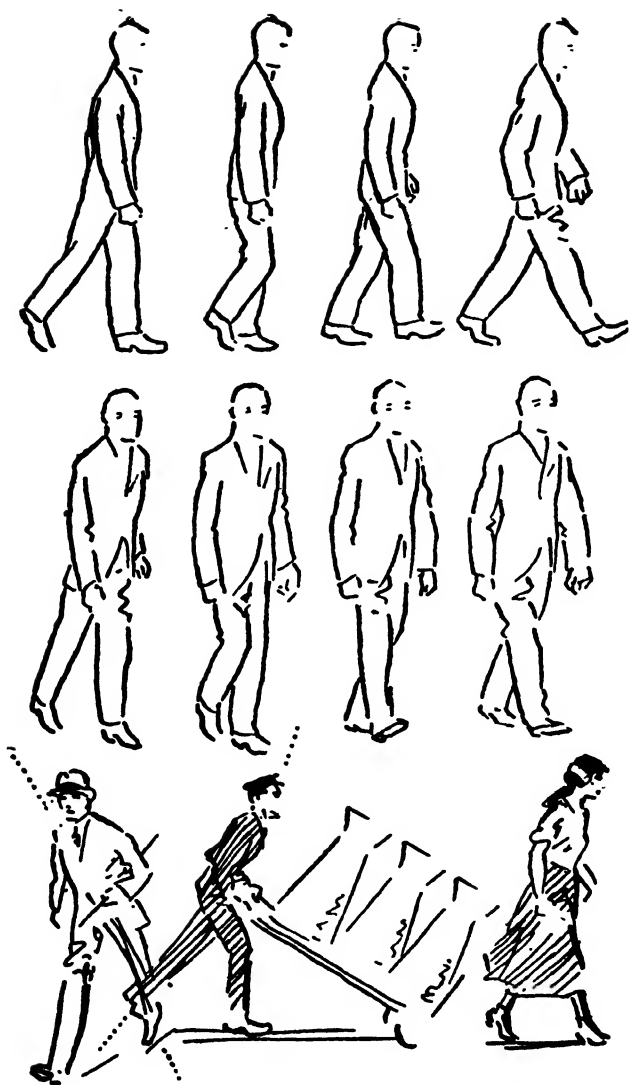


PLATE 14.—WALKING POSITIONS

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

wrong line or making a bad drawing in your effort to get essential action, pose, character, or movement of your subject. The rough sketches of the greatest masters often lack accuracy in drawing.

Thirdly.—Don't rub out. When correcting a line, draw a stronger one through or over the original. See remarks about Plate 18. If you rub out a wrong line you very easily repeat the error. A wrong line is a guide to a right one.

Fourthly.—Look at the subject five times as long as you take to draw it. Practise this with still life, any common stationary object—look at it for thirty seconds, then jot down your impressions in six seconds.

Fifthly.—Forget much of what you have learnt about shading. Light and shade are merely useful in making a pattern or design; such is composition, not life drawing. Shading will not give thickness or movement to a figure; and, in life sketching, all artists usually find they must limit themselves to simple line work.

WALKING

As so many interesting characters have to be drawn walking, it will be well for you to master the consecutive positions of the limbs in a walking

WALKING

figure. At the top of Plate 14 you see four such positions of a man walking on the other side of the road. The most suitable position to express movement is the last; this is because it shows the completed stride and is the position seen most clearly. So, in a fast swinging pendulum, the innumerable intermediate movements become blurred. But I have drawn for you three of these intermediate positions in order that you may see how unfamiliar they appear, as a walking figure. This you will see more clearly if you look at each position separately, covering up the others. Underneath, you have similar walking positions from a different angle of sight. Notice how the arm and shoulder swing with the leg, the right arm and shoulder forward when the left leg is forward and *vice versa*. The slope of the shoulders is important, but must not be overdone. The shoulder droops when in a forward position. The arms have a slightly circular motion coming a little in front of the body, and are usually slightly bent at the elbow. It will help you considerably if you pick out in an illustrated paper those figures which give you the best impression of walking, and try to find the reason why this is so. The movement of the feet should be studied from such photographs, as well as from life.

It is a greater achievement to get movement

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

in your drawing than careful finish ; this is exemplified in the three sketches at the bottom of Plate 14. What do you notice about the man on the left ? He is walking fast. Yes, and how is this effect of speed shown ? Chiefly by the long stride, the body bent at an angle with the rear leg (see dotted line), and swing of right arm backwards. Also by the rapid slashy lines. The slope of the body in line with the back legs is also shown in the drawing of the porter. What are your first impressions of the drawing of the girl on this plate ? A friend of mine, when he saw this sketch, said : " What an old-fashioned girl, and what an easy stride she has—lives an open-air life, I should think ! " I replied : " Exactly, she was a gipsy." His criticisms told me I had got what I wanted—the type. I think you will agree that the success of this life sketch is all in the movement, which brings out very strongly the free and open-air life of this girl. The whole importance in such a sketch is in getting the type of walk. This is true of these three sketches from life. In the girl, the easy stride ; in the man, the hurried alert walk ; and in the porter, the energetic pushing motion.

These three sketches are good examples of the elimination of all unnecessary detail ; and consequently not a single line can be spared. You can readily see that such studies from life may



PLATE 15.—LIFE SKETCHES

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

be worked up to a most detailed finish ; but this process cannot be reversed. Details may be a matter of memory, but that most valuable and charming virtue of any drawing, which is " life," must every time come directly from a sketch from life.

The next two Plates, 15 and 16, contain various examples of quick open-air sketching. It may help you if I attempt to recall my thoughts and impressions when actually at work on these. On Plate 15, a young lady is walking towards me. She wears a hat with a small brim and small high fur collar, fur around bottom of coat, and has the neat short pointed-toe step of the average young lady ; the arms are practically motionless—a usual characteristic, causing a slightly exaggerated movement of shoulders. These were my only impressions which I shot down as quickly as possible, aided by my sub-conscious knowledge of detail, etc., such as is dealt with in previous chapters. Note carefully what is put in and what left out. The erect head is shown by the features being placed a tiny bit high in the oval of the face. The swing of the coat is shown by the lines of the fur at an angle, and faint line in centre.

Next we spot a woman reading a newspaper, which she is holding in both hands. She is stoutly built in face, hands, and body ; her hat

WALKING

sits on the head at an angle which expresses a sense of discomfort to everyone but the wearer. These are my impressions. All these points must be expressed. Notice the curves which give roundness to the figure, and the simple treatment of the hand and face : there is a feeling of bulginess about the whole figure.

Next we have a very rapid small study of a woman standing, resting on one leg. This is a very common position (people very rarely stand evenly on both feet). Notice the slightly bent head, sloping shoulder, hand on left hip. This hip sticks out over the rigid left leg. The other leg is loosely bent. There are a few important educational rules which govern this and similar poses. If you turn back to Plate 8 you will see clearly how the whole weight is taken by the right leg. The upper part of the body swings over to the right in order to preserve the balance of the figure upon the one leg. This causes a distinct slope of the shoulders and the sharp angle at the right hip. In a simple way the figure, as it were, closes up on the one side and opens loosely on the other. Such a pose depends upon your expressing the rigid straightness of the standing leg which takes all the weight, and the slack hanging of the left leg from its hip. You will, of course, observe that the slope of the tilted

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

shoulders, as explained above, is in the opposite direction to the slope of the hanging hip and knees.

Here is a simple rule for the pose of a figure when standing on one foot. Draw the centre of the neck directly above the centre of the instep ; if the weight is on the toes, directly above the toes ; if on the heel, directly above the heel.

Notice particularly how much the right hip sticks out. The upper part of the body seems to rest on it.

The above rules should be very thoroughly committed to memory. Nine poses out of ten will demand their application, and unless you are quite familiar with them you will find that an otherwise quite good life drawing is marred by lack of balance.

After the above somewhat prolonged digression we turn into a restaurant—a place of excellent opportunities for our work. We manage to obtain a complete view of a lady who has turned in her chair and talks to someone standing. With half-shut eyes we notice that the deep shadows give the tilt of the body and head. The general impression of the figure is a series of conflicting angles ; this is usual in seated figures. Set the general lines of the angles in first ; the rim of hat, the chin and neck, the back of the hat, shoulders, left arm,



PLATE 16.—LIFE SKETCHES

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

and back. In adding to these lines we put in, quickly and broadly, the deep shadows, because, owing to the fur, the thickness of the figure depends upon these more than upon folds or creases.

The other three sketches are examples of work at high speed and give you suggestions as to how much to put in; or rather, how much to leave out. Note that the features are carefully and quickly drawn. They are the centre of attraction. The bottom left-hand sketch looks easy, but it was necessary not to have to stop and think of the correct angle of the shoulders, where the creases came and what kind, the angle of the hat, and also the simple construction of the gloved hand. Such knowledge must be second nature in order that one may concentrate on the age and type. Success is solely the result of continued practice and many failures. Until the rules in the earlier part of this book are unconsciously applied, weaknesses of drawing will be apparent.

All these examples, and those following, should be copied on the memory method already mentioned. Look at one for a minute, then put down all you can remember as quickly as possible; and you will find what general rules you have not sufficiently assimilated.

Plate 16 takes us into a park. A man is walking briskly a little distance from us. There is no



PLATE 17 A SIMPLE CHARCOAL SKETCH

(p. 67)

(Reduced from $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. 8 in.)

WALKING

time to waste. He is an alert active young man in a bowler hat. Never mind whether he wears glasses, what colour and how much hair or moustache, whether wearing spats or gloves. Any attempt at detail and you would lose the movement and character of the figure. Compare with Plate 14.

When you do memory drawing exercises from this plate I think you will discover the hardest problems to master will be the following: In the walking figure, the energetic movement of the swinging arms and tilted body. In the public speaker, the swing of the figure away from you shown by the angle of the head, shoulders, and hips, the taut pull of the creases in the front leg. In the star-gazer, the tilt of the head and the unusual view of the features, depending upon the oval shape and imaginary lines as diagrammed on Plate 9. The seated figure presents an unusual difficulty—that of drawing both sides in the same position and, of course, from the opposite aspect, resulting in a problem of accurate perspective in shoulders, elbows, and hands. In the man with the pipe it is probable that you will experience greater difficulty than in the other memory tests. It will only be done if you have thoroughly mastered and practised the principles mentioned in the past chapters on features and form.

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

SKETCH PORTRAITS

We have now reached the type of work which is perhaps the most fascinating and appreciated; and, if you have practised thoroughly on the lines laid down, you will be surprised how ably you can not only get a likeness, but a life-likeness in a short study of anyone who will kindly sit for you. One warning before we analyse the remaining plates. A pretty girl is a difficult problem. In your earlier attempts you will have greater success in the more well-defined features of a middle-aged man.

On Plate 18 we have a page of heads. In three instances you will see the first rapid lines, and then without erasing a single stroke, I have worked in more detail. The first study (Fig. A) is interesting for the tilt of the head and the strong character of the subject. One's first impression is of determination and firmness. This must be obtained in the first quick sketch and relentlessly held at all cost, whatever the type or degree of finish. Fig. B is essentially a study of a type. Please note carefully in this, as in the others, the lines of the first sketch—note every little stroke or dot, and then find them in the second completed sketch. You will discover that, without exception, they are the most important points and upon them the character,

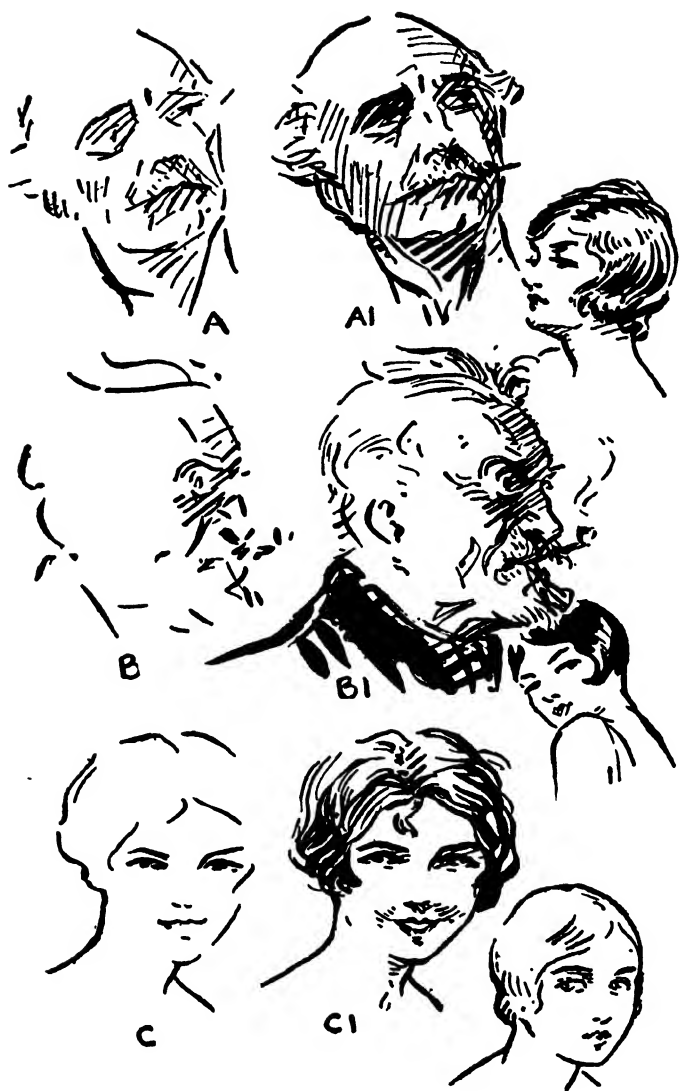


PLATE 18.—LIFE DRAWINGS OF HEADS

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

the features, or the anatomy and construction are built. This is proved by the fact that Fig. B is as definitely a portrait as Fig. B1. The secret of this lies in seizing on the fundamental points, and not finishing up one part more than another. This principle applies when completing a drawing as in Fig. B1—an equal degree of finish must be applied to all parts. In the third pair we have a girl's head—a most difficult subject for line work, more easily rendered with a piece of charcoal or soft pencil owing to the rounded and smooth surfaces and resulting lack of sharpness or strength. In Fig. C the position of the features and their type are lightly, carefully, and neatly dotted in. Generally speaking, in all young people there is a lack of definite characteristics and a freshness which is difficult to obtain. Therefore, a simplicity of line is necessary, as shown in Fig. C compared with Figs. A and B. Avoid the subtleties of shadows which in an older face develop into decided shapes showing the matured character.

The three small studies of pretty girls show this principle; and when you seize the opportunity of making such studies from life, compare them with these. The usual error is to make the subject appear too old or not pretty enough. It has been said that all art is an exaggeration. The question is, what do you wish to exaggerate? Age or youth?



PLATE 19 ---THE USES OF PENCIL.

(p. 71)

(Reduced from 12 in 8 in.)

SKETCH PORTRAITS

Obviously in this case it should be youth and charm. It is very, very important to make such youth drawings with clear, simple, smooth lines.

Plate 20, age and character, is very aptly concerned with the effect of age upon a face. Old age is expressed in Fig. B. Notice the downward trend of the lines, the suggested furrows on the bony forehead ; the skin seems to hang from the skull. Notice especially the eyes, how the upper lid droops, and the flabby sagging underneath. All this can be observed in Fig. A from a different aspect, but particularly in Fig. B is to be seen the apparent effort to keep the eyes open. The mouth droops and is "sucked in" a little, the lower lip being thin.

Figs. C and D show two men of very different appearance and yet of about the same middle age. This is the age when there is, more than in any other, variety of form and feature in the human face. Babies are much alike ; very old people are much alike ; but between forty and sixty the characteristics and personality of the man (or woman) are most evident. Compare the curved lines which have been used to express the puffiness of Fig. C, with the ragged lines of Figs. A and B. These lines indicate the loss of flesh due to age. You will easily be able to pick out those few important lines which show clearly the bone beneath the skin

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

of the forehead and nose. Mark the absence of these lines in Fig. C.

In Fig. D we have the very interesting type of a middle-aged man, showing clearly the formation of the skull, but with a muscular firmness which does not permit of any sagging. The startling difference between these two men gives an idea of the great range of feature of this period in life. Note the curved lines of Fig. C and the straight lines of Fig. D. Note the absence of hollowness of the eye socket in Fig. C, the puffiness under the eye, the fleshiness of the nose, and the lack of sharp outline generally. Fig. D shows an effective treatment of the deep-set eye socket. There are very few curved lines in this drawing.

Fig. E shows a man of about 30 years of age. I have used this drawing because of the peculiar "bumpiness" of the face so often seen in men of this age. It is no easy task to portray this age successfully. Notice particularly the outline of the right side of the face, which shows what I mean by the word "bumpiness." It is the time of life when the smoothness of youth is lost, but the lines of age have not yet arrived.

Each line of these sketches is well worthy of study and analysis. Take a line at random, and discover its meaning, that is to say, what it represents or suggests. Try to decide for yourself the most

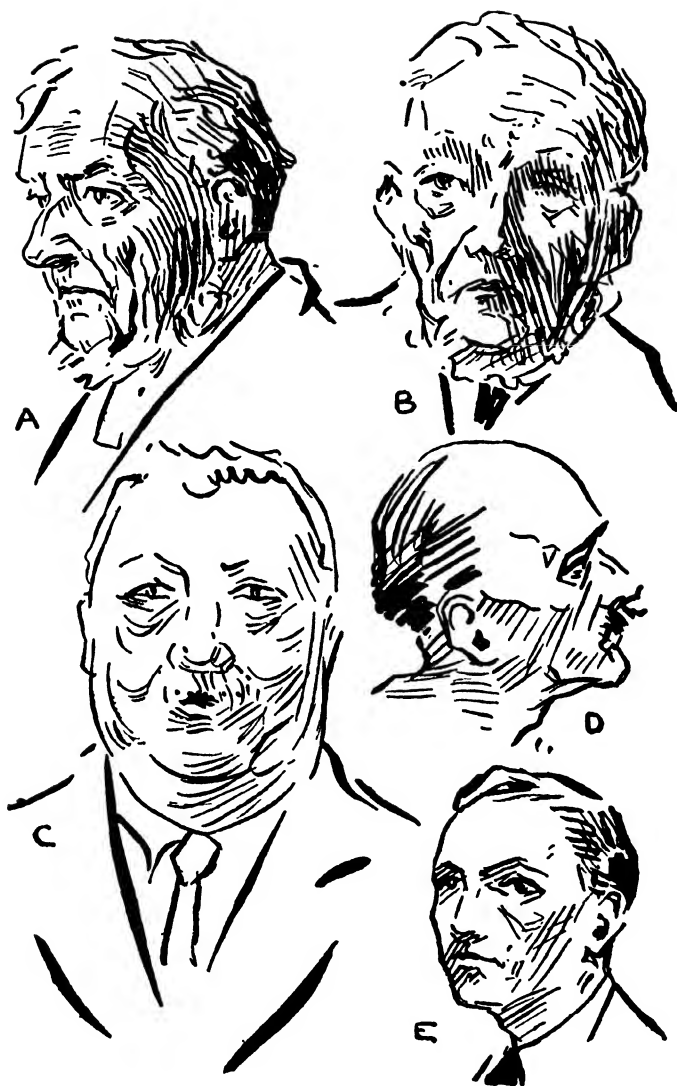


PLATE 20.—AGE AND CHARACTER

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

necessary lines in any of the figures in Plates 15, 16, 18, and 20.

Having thoroughly thought out the causes and reasons for each line in each one of these drawings you will be able to make an intelligent memory study. Study the figure closely ; shut your eyes and try to visualise it. Do this two or three times, then shut the book and reproduce quickly and boldly as much as you can remember. Now compare. Such a memory exercise is a very severe test for any artist, and if, in your early attempts, you only remember one feature and draw it according to the rules in the earlier chapters of this book, you will be repaid for your trouble. An alternative and easier system is to copy the drawing a few times ; slowly and very carefully at first, gradually attaining more speed. Then, putting aside your copies and this book, make your memory drawing. It is advisable to make your drawings twice the size of these illustrations.

As has already been stated, all drawing is memory drawing ; and, if you persevere in memory exercises, I can assure you that you will find it a quick and certain means to becoming a successful artist.

CHAPTER V

VARIOUS MEDIUMS

MY main purpose in this book, that of describing how to sketch from life, has been fairly covered in the preceding pages. But I have dealt only with line drawing, and, as there are other mediums peculiarly suitable for some subjects, I must tell what I have learned and experienced in such fields.

The lessons of observation and discrimination, which I have already given, stand firm for any medium or method of work. A new medium does not mean just a new means of putting down your impressions. Every medium has its own outlook. For instance, if you are drawing in line, you look for and think in line, even before you start to draw ; but, if you are using a brush and tone, then you must think in tones—masses of tones.

SILHOUETTE

This change of outlook is essential even when drawing in silhouette. On Plate 21 I have drawn a few silhouettes to illustrate my points. In such work you must draw masses and not lines ; yet of

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

course each of the masses is bound by an edge. The important fact to realise is that in line drawing one is considering the outside or edge of a mass, but in silhouette or tone sketching one works from the interior of a mass to the edge. This is exemplified on Plate 21, Figs. A, B and C, where you see three stages of a simple silhouette drawing. You note how the second stage is a working out from stage A, and that stage C is the careful adding to stage B of distinctive details.

I am sure that only very few of you will find much attraction in this style of work, but I do assure you that practice on these lines not only helps the wash artist to obtain surety and precision with his brush, but very definitely assists the line artist by giving him an ability to see shapes as masses and to see masses whole and not in part. The vital importance of the slightest variation on the edge of a silhouette gives the line artist thought upon his accuracy and precision of detail.

Practise such work with no pencil preparation on the principle of working outwards as illustrated by Figs. A, B, and C. The other examples on this plate require little comment. Fig. D is an interesting example of a sketch where silhouette was, to me, the ideal method of work. This woman's profile was perfectly expressive of her nature and character; full face and three-quarter she failed to interest me,

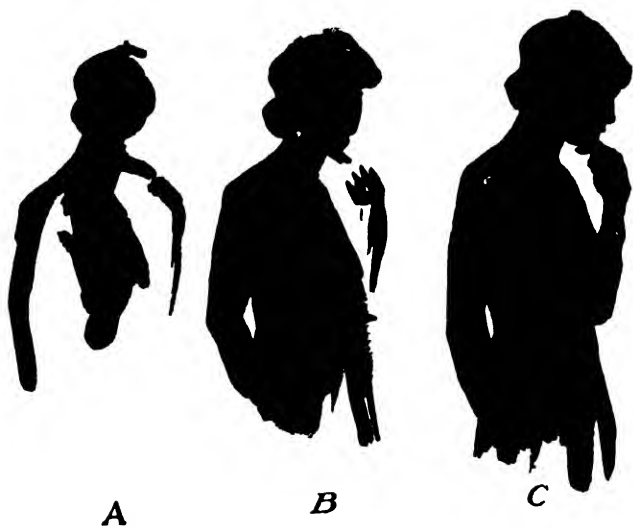


PLATE 21.—SILHOUETTES

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

but directly I saw her profile I automatically used this style.

Fig. F is a very quick study of an old man, showing in method how one may break away from pure silhouette with advantage, as I have done in hand and hair. Fig. G is a simple sketch of a hand showing how much may be learnt from this style regarding proportions.

SOLID BLACK

Let us now make one more step towards wash work. On Plate 23 we have four speedy sketches, all very similar for the reason that you should appreciate the small differences which go to make various characters. Such work as this on Plate 23 is to my mind very difficult, if attempted as these were, with no pencil preparation whatever. But what an exercise! What a study in proportions! Do not work too slowly or carefully at first. Place boldly with a full brush the main strokes, being careful to keep well within the actual size of masses. In such direct brush work as this I always start with the eyes, then nose, then mouth, and work round them, thereby echoing in my general progress the actual method which is used for each individual mass.

Two black shapes for eye sockets, two tiny blobs



PLATE 22.—A DRAWING IN CRAYON

(p. 73)

(Reduced from $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. $9\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

CHARCOAL

for corner of mouth and a larger for the nose shadow, a stroke or two for hair and chin-shadow. Then start again at the beginning and shape up your eye-tones and so forth. Finally, holding the sketch at arm's length, judge critically your proportions and readjust, if possible, by a delicate enlargement where necessary.

There is one rule urgent before all for this and indeed for all brush work. Keep the eyes half-closed. It is the only way to see tone masses and, in most cases, tone values. You may find that in this method you unavoidably use a few lines, but such exercises where the main effort is to see masses of tone only will help you far more than just filling in a line drawing.

CHARCOAL

To progress another step towards this mass outlook I ask your attention to Plate 17. This is a simple charcoal sketch and serves two purposes in tuition.

First, it shows you more or less how much may be done by a stick of charcoal when sketching. I know that one may, by very careful manipulation and the use of a stomp, obtain most finished results ; but I do not advise such work. For finished work

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

one should use an instrument which requires no strain or playing with, such as a brush or pencil. Charcoal is ideal for quick tone effects, for roughing in the pose, the shade, or the main shape. Also I have here shown the reverse method to Plate 21. Note how I worked round the white spaces, putting in tone where there was none : all for the purpose of seeing the white spaces superimposed, as it were, upon a black background. Of course, a simpler method is to work with white chalk on toned paper, but then the problem resembles that of Plate 21, in that you are drawing shapes. But here you are not drawing the shape upon which you are concentrating, you are working round the shape ; you work in to its edge and not out to it.

All these varying outlooks help to train the eye and enable you to draw more quickly and accurately. This sketch on Plate 17 is of a sleeping man in a railway carriage, the original of which was drawn in soft pencil and under very shaking and cramped conditions. I redrew it for this plate in charcoal as it is a subject particularly suitable for showing the importance of the white spaces.

The chief trouble with charcoal for drawings is that it has to be fixed with a spray and fixative, and as the charcoal is so precariously attached to the paper, such fixing must be very carefully performed. A surplus of fixative will cause the charcoal to clot



PLATE 23.—SPEEDY SKETCHES IN SOLID BLACK

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into a mottled surface. Better give two light coats than to soak the paper.

Of course charcoal is easier and safer to manipulate than the brush black of Plates 21 and 23 : you can feel an uncertain way in charcoal ; in fact it is a medium peculiarly suitable for " thinking on the paper " ; whereas in the solid black style you must think everything before you touch the paper. Nevertheless, I advocate most strongly much exercise in solid blacks, for just as many a pianoforte exercise or study is more difficult than the average composition, so such work will prepare you for better drawing.

If you are very disappointed with your results, I suggest that you revert to charcoal for a time, making your work larger in order to counteract the probable coarseness of your line. The larger you work, in any medium, the better the practice. The artists of years ago with their huge ateliers and canvases had one advantage over us who live in more crowded days. Size exposes weaknesses, as, no doubt, you have realised in your line sketching.

Your charcoal sketches should be at least four to six times the size of my plates. Remember in such drawings to work towards the outline wherever possible, thereby giving yourself a few moments to consolidate your thought and understanding of the exact shape.



PLATE 24 ---A PORTRAIT IN CRAYON.

(p. 74)

(Reduced from 9 in. 5½ in.)

4.

PENCIL

PENCIL

Let us now briefly consider the uses of pencil as an instrument to represent tone. A good craftsman loves his tools and uses them for their proper work and to the most efficient purpose. A proper carpenter will not knock a nail in with pincers ; neither will an able artist attempt to do with a pencil that which is better done with a brush or pen or charcoal. A pencil is a pointed instrument, hence it is most adaptable for drawing lines and dots. Never use a pencil for smooth shading—a brush can do it better.

On Plate 19 I give you a few illustrations of limbs drawn with a pencil. You will note that in each of these drawings I have used a large variety of direction in line and have contented myself with comparatively light lines excepting the spots where a strong edge gives form. In doing so I have again reminded you to respect the limitations of your material. Remember that in pencil work there is a natural ease for drawing lines in any direction and for a softness of tone.

The bold lines and corners are very valuable in a pencil drawing if used economically ; the variation of tone in a pencil line is quite considerable and should be exploited whenever helpful. This method of varying the strength of an outline was

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given me by the "life" master at an art school. He was a true artist and essentially a craftsman who seized every possible means of expression of which his instrument was capable. I think he used to call this the "thick and thin" principle. Use a B or BB pencil; in no other instrument can you so speedily vary the tone depth of a line, yet retaining delicacy, clarity, and firmness. Such a graded outline is, of course, not literally true; but remember that all line work is imaginative and not literal, for, as has often been said, there is no line in nature. Nevertheless, a graded pencil outline, drawn in sympathy with the form and shadows on that form, gives a true artistic sense of the subject. You must exaggerate something, especially in line work where so much tone and colour are left out.

I do not intend to analyse the examples of Plate 19 with regard to anatomy. There are much better drawings in any art gallery and in many books. My aim here is to clear of technical pit-falls the way for you to sketch from life. These drawings have been reduced about one-third and have lost a little freshness and sharpness in reproduction. Work freely but carefully. Pay all heed to the modelling. Where possible reduce forms to simple planes as on the knee drawing. Note the direction of lines on the upper-arm front view, and how it helps to give the bend and perspective. Study anatomy

CARBON OR CRAYON

that you may know where the bones lie and where their form shows at the surface. When the subject does not depend upon strength of form, as in the head shown here, keep a simple uniformity or whole by an evenness of tone.

CARBON OR CRAYON

Now turn to Plate 22 and you see a startling change of technique with but a slight variation of material. Here is a drawing in Conté crayon. For some time this was my favourite medium for quick life sketching. There is a strength allied to freedom and speed which attracted me much. With the Conté crayon or carbon-pencil one can get an effect as quickly as with pencil yet as strong as ink, where required. Note how fine are the lines on the face of the old man, and how broad and free the coarse shading of his clothes.

Each of these sketches was drawn in about ten minutes. In such work one must, indeed, chance a deal. The more sub-conscious knowledge you have, the more hope of success. Do not neglect the teaching in the earlier part of this book. Remember to cover the whole sketch in the first thirty seconds with your preliminary lines of guidance. Study hands, heads, folds, etc. You need to know something about them for very quick sketching. Read

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my book, *A Manual on Caricature and Cartoon Drawing*; it will help you, I know, to read heads quickly.

Some artists work with the Conté crayon in a similar careful manner to that of the pencil sketches on Plate 19, and certainly an excellent result is often obtained; but I advocate as much freedom and speed as possible for the crayon, as it is peculiarly suitable for such lightning sketches as shown in this plate.

Remembering that this original was about twice the size, study this sketch more for broad principles than for detailed tricks. Appreciate the obvious fact that I had raced in the whole figure practically at once. Then I worked over my first very light sketch, correcting where necessary and putting in local tones and shapes, but leaving the details of the head and hands to the last.

On Plate 24 I show a larger study of a head drawn with the same material. Conté crayons or carbon pencils vary very much with their maker; consequently there are features in this drawing regarding surface effect which you may not find easy to copy exactly. In any case, I heartily condemn any attempt to copy this work or, indeed, any of these later ones. Find your own subjects; I wish but to show the way and the obstacles. This drawing has not been reduced so much as the previous one, and consequently the texture and strength of individual



PLATE 25.—STUDIES IN WASIL.

(p. 77)

(Reduced from 12½ in. 8 in.)

QUICK WASH WORK

lines are more pronounced. You may feel that there is a lack of tone value in this work. Very good ! Go ahead and get tone value in your work. I, personally, want a brush when I think in tone values ; but such a point of view is entirely individual.

This illustration shows very well the variety of line possible with Conté—compare the lines on the cheek with those of the shadow beneath the chin. Note also the simplicity of the strokes and how few they are. Not only do I deprecate the copying of this plate, but I warn you not to look too closely. Get the general idea of what may be done, and then practise from life for yourself. You will observe, perhaps, the great limitations in this medium—the difficulty of producing an even flat tone and drawing a precise and small shape. For these hindrances I do not advise such a medium for really finished or developed work ; but how excellent and suitable for rapid impression sketching !

QUICK WASH WORK

I am quite sure that all my readers have looked with interest and curiosity at the plates in this book illustrating wash work ; and, no doubt, you have been wishing to try this form of drawing. I say drawing for the same reason that I insist, in my book

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

on water-colour, on the phrase water-colour drawing. The great difference between water and oil as mediums is that one is a drawing by means of a brush and the other is a painting ; in the former you deal with direct brush work, yet the brush stroke is seldom observable : the brush in water-colour is the means only to fill a shape and does not influence the actual surface of the paper. Study and analyse your instruments and materials, and you will become clever at your art.

However keen you may be to use a brush, I feel happy in having directed your first attention and in devoting the major part of this book to line work. A brush is very much more tricky to handle with efficiency than a pencil or even a pen, especially for quick sketching. The flexibility and enormous variety in width in a brush make it a hopeless instrument in the inexperienced hand.

It is all very well to make a careful line drawing and then to fill in with flat or graded washes ; but in a quick sketch one has no time for careful, if any, pencil preparation. Indeed, the great attraction of a quick wash sketch is the arrangement of tone masses and not the extreme accuracy of outline. Wash work is entirely suitable for presenting tone values. The tone masses may be irregular and regrettably untrue to careful shaping of outline ; yet, if the values of the tones are true in depth and the general

QUICK WASH WORK

shape is right with regard to the position of the subject or model, the result will be satisfactory.

The foregoing remarks are, I think, very plain when associated with Plate 25. These three sketches were very speedy, about three to five minutes. I was sitting in an art school life class, had finished my drawing of the model, and made these fleet studies. Fig. A is interesting for its very rapid execution. Observe how one wash was swept over easel, frock, and skirt and even the forearm, the next heavier tone being added, and finally the darkest spots placed.

Fig. B is of value as illustrating economy of tone. Here are only two tones or workings, yet the pose was obtained and sufficient detail suggested to give character and form.

The rapid sketch of the art school model at Fig. C is slightly more advanced and has four distinct tone values.

All these sketches had but the very slightest pencil preparation, just a few faint lines giving direction of pose and main proportions.

The value of such work, apart from the practice in placing well disposed washes of fairly accurate proportions, is that it teaches you to lay down a wash and leave it. You have no time to "muck it about" or fiddle with it. Water-colour drawing must be like pen-drawing inasmuch as it must be

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

direct—a sure placing and then not a touch. In this way you will not only learn to use a brush, but you will see your errors clearly and not blurred with confused corrections.

STYLE IN WASH WORK

I must now take you to Plate 26. Theoretically, this should have been discussed first, but I would rather you start with the primary principle of a brush, that of shaping tone masses. On this plate are specimens of work such as should fill many sketch books of any artist. Let me briefly comment. Fig. A shows the simple expression of a stockinged leg and shoe. Observe the sharp edge of high lights and also how the gradation of tone on the stocking is obtained by stroking a deeper tone on to the still wet surface of the first wash.

Fig. B shows the outlook of a wash artist on a subject most often drawn in pencil. Note the placing of tone over the back of the hand; instead of a few light strokes as in pencil or pen we have a tone mass with high lights obtained by leaving the white paper. Such a drawing is an entire reversal of outlook to line drawing: this is obvious by comparison with the “hand” drawings on Plate 11.

Again at Fig. C we have a very definite wash drawing. The extreme simplicity of one value

PORTRAIT WASH WORK

throughout compelled a keen attention to the shapes, and such exercises as this will teach you more than any others to use your brush.

Fig. D is a quick portrait study with most to be learnt in the hair. Put in your first light wash, leaving the high lights; then before this is dry, drop in your depths. Let this nearly dry and add the finer strokes.

To illustrate quite clearly this method of working a deeper tone on to a light one while still wet, I have included Fig. E. This eye was drawn in about thirty seconds. One simple wash and then with a deeper tone I immediately added the shadow of the upper eyelid and the pupil.

Fig. F shows a loose sleeved frock over the arm of a pianist. In this case each wash was dry before the next and darker was added.

Having practised assiduously on the simple lines of these plates, using only two or three (at most four) washes or tones, you will be justified in letting yourself "go," not worrying so much about execution as about likeness of form and general pictorial effect.

PORTRAIT WASH WORK

On Plate 2 I show two portrait sketches, which illustrate what I mean. Whereas Plate 25 and Plate 26 were studies or exercises in brush-work,

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

this plate shows studies of people. I was, in both of these, all out for a likeness—a study of life. Hence the execution is less likely to be as good as on the previous plates.

Fig. A was a fifteen minute study. You will note that the tones are so confused as to be inseparable. I should think there are five or six, but only three main ones. You will be able to see even in this reproduction that each wash was untouched when once dry. Remember, please, that it is better to start again than to attempt the rescue of a failure by scrubbing or over-drawing or washing down: all such tricks may fairly be attempted in a long posed portrait, but in a quick sketch let your motto be freshness. I repeat, however muddled may be your drawing, however many tone values you may use, however uncertain your brush strokes, do not stop to fiddle or alter when once a wash is dry.

Use a well-filled brush but not to excess. Have two pans with mixed black tone in each—your two major values, light and medium. In another pan you have a squeeze of black pigment (any variety so long as it is artists' quality); with this you may obtain your deep tones. Finally, of course, you have the artist's quick change department—a glass of pure water.

Having briefly sketched in your proportions,

PORTRAIT WASH WORK

curve of eye line, mouth line, as already expounded in my early chapters, take a fair-sized brush, say, size six or eight, sable of course, and sweep in rapidly the main light tone-masses such as hair, dress, the form, eye socket, and shadow on face. Now, with a stronger solution, put in second wash on hair, not heeding whether your first is dry or not. Now second tone on the face and neck. Add the depths in the hair before the previous wash is dry. Only with practice will you learn where to keep a sharp or a soft edge, where to drop additional colour into a damp paper or wash, and where to wait until the wash is dry before laying on a second wash. In such quick work much is purely sub-conscious experience and some is chance.

Fig. B is included as a contrast to Fig. A. Note how I have been forced into considerable line work as the quickest way to get the straggling hair and rugged lined old face.

I want you to compare this wash drawing with Fig. B1, Plate 18, where is a pen drawing of the same head and pose. It is clear to me, by comparison, that the most suitable medium was the free, but by no means easy, brush ; yet it has to be drawn in the feeling of a line drawing. This is not a common case, but shows you what liberties have to be taken by the quick-sketch artist.

I apologise if this plate is not perfect in reproduc-

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

tion, but it is an old one and had to be cut from a sheet of sketches found lying in a cupboard.

WASH WORK ON TONED PAPER

And now we have but one more plate to consider—the one that has been placed as Frontispiece to this volume. The use of toned paper for quick sketching is a favourite practice of mine. The fact that there is already a tone saves considerable time. In such work one has to use both the outlook of black on white and that of white on black.

Let us briefly consider Plate 1—the face, collars, hands, and cuffs had to be considered as light masses on dark; the rest of the figure is dark on light. The result of such toned paper is a pleasant modulation of tone due to the persistence of the paper tone under both dark and white washes. Compare this with the sketches on Plate 2 and you will appreciate this modulation of tone which gives the appearance of finish and reality which is the peculiar value of accurate tone and chiaroscuro. This sketch took only about twenty minutes. I most heartily recommend toned paper for quick sketching either in colour or half-tone.

Learn to respect your brush, nay, rather to love it. Treat it tenderly, firmly, and never attempt to strain it beyond its suitable purpose unless desperate



PLATE 26.—SKETCHES IN WASH.
 (p. 78)
 (Reduced from 13 in. 8 in.)

FINAL REMARKS

measures are needed. For example, a brush is unsuitable for drawing long, straight, thin lines ; yet at times one must do so.

Remember, please, when looking at the half-tone plates in this book that reproduction lessens the original values ; that is to say, the tones tend to become paler. Particularly is this so owing to the slight screen shade such as is plainly discernible on Plate 2, where the screen was cut round the edges of the original pieces of paper.

Never think that quick sketching can be successfully acquired without much careful work. It is persistent careful study and the frequent exercise of from two to four hours on one subject which will imprint on your memory sufficient knowledge to draw upon in your quick sketching.

Never be disheartened, never be satisfied, and you will steadily improve.

FINAL REMARKS

Technique is a word much used in the artist world. To you it should mean a clear bold stroke of the correct shape and expressing fully its purpose in your drawing.

Individuality.—Drawing should be as much an individual expression as writing. Everybody's

SKETCHING FROM LIFE

writing is different, and every artist's drawing is different in style and feeling. Do not make any one artist your pattern.

I earnestly ask you to avoid any method of tuition which lays down cast-iron rules for figure drawing ; any suggestion of fixed proportions, stereotyped shading, and where to start will only deaden your life drawings, and reduce your efforts to a mechanical performance.

As an example of individual expression, I will suppose that you have to draw such a man as is shown in Fig. C, Plate 20. His jovial nature is immediately felt by you, and, if unhampered by any strict rules, your pencil is unconsciously influenced by this feeling, and the resulting lines have a cheerfulness about them which is completely absent in Fig. D. In the latter figure you receive an impression of a keen sharpness in the man, shown almost unconsciously by keen sharp lines ; and so one artist can never lay down a law on the type or direction of a line.

The rules in the earlier part of this book are scientific. Art is not science. There are no rules in art, and it is not to be reasoned out into a series of rules.

Art is the ability to express one's individual impressions. This book aims to develop this ability in those who desire, but who, through

FINAL REMARKS

difficulties, have been unable to obtain success in the line of art with which this book deals.

The Fascination of Drawing.—There is no hobby which will give you greater enjoyment and fun than the developing of any natural ability for drawing which you may possess. Even apart from any professional eminence to which you may attain, it combines real pleasure with attractive education.

Keep this book constantly handy for reference, and, if possible, take it with you when out sketching. You will find illustrations in this book with which to compare and criticise your work. As you progress in knowledge and experience you will find the definitions and rules laid down here of constant and increasing value, and you will, I trust, become talented and efficient in this great and enjoyable art of sketching from life.



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